

through the twin wire zone, means for supporting the belts for forming a wedge shaped entrance slot into the first section, a fiber suspension supplying headbox having an outlet placed and directed for delivering fiber suspension from the headbox to the wedge shaped entrance slot of the first section of the twin wire zone;

the twin wire zone having a second section following the first section along the path of the belts through the twin wire zone; in the second section, a plurality of first drainage strips are positioned for contacting the first wire belt; in the second section, a plurality of second drainage strips are positioned within the loop of the second wire belt and are for contacting the second wire belt; the first strips being shifted in position along the path of the wire belts with respect to the second strips so that the first and second strips are offset and in a non-opposing relationship; first support means for resiliently supporting the first drainage strips against the respective wire belt that the strips contact;

second support means supporting the second drainage strips rigidly against the second wire belt;

first means for collecting the water drained from the fiber suspension by the most upstream one of the drainage strips;

second means separate from the first means for collecting the water drained from the fiber suspension by all of the other drainage strips; and

the twin wire zone having a third section following the second section along the path of the wire belts through the twin wire zone; a second drainage element in the third section for being engaged by one of the wire belts as the wire belts travel over the second drainage element, [The twin wire former of claim 1, wherein] the twin wire zone being [is] free of rolls which deflect the twin wire zone.

26. (Amended) A twin-wire former for the production of a paper web from a fiber suspension, the twin wire former comprising:

first and second web forming wire belts, means for directing the wire belts to travel along a path together for forming a twin wire zone of the twin wire former, with the web between the wire belts as the wire belts travel along the path through the twin wire zone, neither wire belt defining a single wire predrainage zone;

each wire belt forming an endless loop;

the twin wire zone having a first section which includes a first drainage element at the start of the path through the twin wire zone, means for supporting the belts for forming a wedge shaped entrance slot into the first section, a fiber suspension supplying headbox having an outlet placed and directed for delivering fiber suspension from the headbox to the wedge shaped entrance slot of the first section of the twin wire zone;

the twin wire zone having a second section following the first section along the path of the belts through the twin wire zone; in the second section, a plurality of first drainage strips are positioned for contacting the first wire belt; in the second section, a plurality of second drainage strips are positioned within the loop of the second wire belt and are for contacting the second wire belt; the first strips being shifted in position along the path of the wire belts with respect to the second strips so that the first and second strips are offset and in a non-opposing relationship; first support means for resiliently supporting the first drainage strips against the respective wire belt that the strips contact;

second support means supporting the second drainage strips rigidly against the second wire belt;

first means for collecting the water drained from the fiber suspension by the most upstream one of the drainage strips;

second means separate from the first means for collecting the water drained from the fiber suspension by all of the other drainage strips; and

the twin wire zone having a third section following the second section along the path of the wire belts through the twin

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wire zone; a second drainage element in the third section for being engaged by one of the wire belts as the wire belts travel over the second drainage element, [The twin wire former of claim 1, wherein] the twin wire zone being [is] free of any forming rolls.

3 29. (Twice Amended) A twin-wire former for the production of a paper web from a fiber suspension, the twin wire former comprising:

first and second web forming wire belts, means for directing the wire belts to travel along a path together for forming a twin wire zone of the twin wire former, with the web between the wire belts as the wire belts travel along the path through the twin wire zone, neither wire belt defining a single wire predrainage zone [of a substantial length];

each wire belt forming an endless loop;

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the twin wire zone having a first section which includes a first drainage element at the start of the path through the twin wire zone, means for supporting the belts for forming a wedge shaped entrance slot into the first section, a fiber suspension supplying headbox having an outlet placed and directed for delivering fiber suspension from the headbox to the wedge shaped entrance slot of the first section of the twin wire zone;

the twin wire zone having a second section following the first section along the path of the belts through the twin wire zone; in the second section, a plurality of first drainage strips are positioned within the loop of the first wire belt and are for contacting the first wire belt; in the second section, a plurality of second drainage strips are positioned within the loop of the second wire belt and are for contacting the second wire belt; the first strips being shifted in position along the path of the wire belts with respect to the second strips so that the first and second strips are offset and in a non-opposing relationship; first support means for resiliently supporting the first drainage strips against the respective wire belt that the

strips contact, the last one of the second drainage strips being located downstream of the last one of the first drainage strips;

second support means supporting the second drainage strips rigidly against the second wire belt;

the twin wire zone having a third section following the second section along the path of the wire belts through the twin wire zone; a second drainage element in the third section for being engaged by one of the wire belts as the wire belts travel over the second drainage element, the second drainage element having an open surface to enable water to be drained through the wire belt in contact therewith; and

the twin wire zone being free of rolls which deflect the twin wire zone.

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4.30. (Twice Amended) A twin-wire former for the production of a paper web from a fiber suspension, the twin wire former comprising:

first and second web forming wire belts, means for directing the wire belts to travel along a path together for forming a twin wire zone of the twin wire former, with the web between the wire belts as the wire belts travel along the path through the twin wire zone, neither wire belt defining a single wire predrainage zone [of a substantial length];

each wire belt forming an endless loop;

the twin wire zone having a first section which includes a first drainage element at the start of the path through the twin wire zone, means for supporting the belts for forming a wedge shaped entrance slot into the first section, a fiber suspension supplying headbox having an outlet placed and directed for delivering fiber suspension from the headbox to the wedge shaped entrance slot of the first section of the twin wire zone;

the twin wire zone having a second section following the first section along the path of the belts through the twin wire zone; in the second section, a plurality of first drainage strips are positioned within the loop of the first wire belt and

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are for contacting the first wire belt; in the second section, a plurality of second drainage strips are positioned within the loop of the second wire belt and are for contacting the second wire belt; the first strips being shifted in position along the path of the wire belts with respect to the second strips so that the first and second strips are offset and in a non-opposing relationship; first support means for resiliently supporting the first drainage strips against the respective wire belt that the strips contact, the last one of the second drainage strips being located downstream of the last one of the first drainage strips;

second support means supporting the second drainage strips rigidly against the second wire belt;

the twin wire zone having a third section following the second section along the path of the wire belts through the twin wire zone; a second drainage element in the third section for being engaged by one of the wire belts as the wire belts travel over the second drainage element; and

the twin wire zone being free of any forming rolls.

Please add the following new claims 32 and 33:

32. A twin-wire former for the production of a paper web from a fiber suspension, the twin wire former comprising:

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first and second web forming wire belts, means for directing the wire belts to travel along a path together for forming a twin wire zone of the twin wire former, with the web between the wire belts as the wire belts travel along the path through the twin wire zone, neither wire belt defining a single wire predrainage zone;

each wire belt forming an endless loop;

the twin wire zone having a first section which includes a ^{single} first drainage element at the start of the path through the twin wire zone, means for supporting the belts for forming a wedge shaped entrance slot into the first section, a fiber suspension supplying headbox having an outlet placed and directed for delivering fiber suspension from the headbox to the wedge shaped entrance slot of the first section of the twin wire

zone; a curved drainage element in the first section, the curved drainage element having an open surface to enable drainage of water from the fiber suspension and being curved along the path of the belts through the twin wire zone, the curved drainage element being engaged by one of the wire belts, for curving the path of the belts around the curved drainage element after the entrance of the suspension into the entrance slot;

the twin wire zone having a second section following the first section along the path of the belts through the twin wire zone; in the second section, a plurality of first drainage strips are positioned within the loop of the first wire belt and are for contacting the first wire belt; in the second section, a plurality of second drainage strips are positioned within the loop of the second wire belt and are for contacting the second wire belt; the first strips being shifted in position along the path of the wire belts with respect to the second strips so that the first and second strips are offset and in a non-opposing relationship; first support means for resiliently supporting the first drainage strips against the respective wire belt that the strips contact;

second support means supporting the second drainage strips rigidly against the second wire belt; and

means for supplying a vacuum in the area of the second drainage strips;

the twin wire zone having a third section following the second section along the path of the wire belts through the twin wire zone; a second drainage element in the third section, for being engaged by one of the wire belts as the wire belts travel over the second drainage element, the second drainage element having an open surface to enable water to be drained through the wire belt in contact therewith; and

the twin wire zone being free of guide rolls which deflect the twin wire zone and which cause a table roll effect.

33. A twin-wire former for the production of a paper web from a fiber suspension, the twin wire former comprising:

first and second web forming wire belts, means for directing the wire belts to travel along a path together for forming a twin wire zone of the twin wire former, with the web between the wire belts as the wire belts travel along the path through the twin wire zone, neither wire belt defining a single wire predrainage zone;

each wire belt forming an endless loop;

the twin wire zone having a first section which includes a first drainage element at the start of the path through the twin wire zone, means for supporting the belts for forming a wedge shaped entrance slot into the first section, a fiber suspension supplying headbox having an outlet placed and directed for delivering fiber suspension from the headbox to the wedge shaped entrance slot of the first section of the twin wire zone; a curved drainage element in the first section, the curved drainage element having an open surface to enable drainage of water from the fiber suspension and being curved along the path of the belts through the twin wire zone, the curved drainage element being engaged by one of the wire belts, for curving the path of the belts around the curved drainage element after the entrance of the suspension into the entrance slot;

the twin wire zone having a second section following the first section along the path of the belts through the twin wire zone; in the second section, a plurality of first drainage strips are positioned within the loop of the first wire belt and are for contacting the first wire belt; in the second section, a plurality of second drainage strips are positioned within the loop of the second wire belt and are for contacting the second wire belt; the first strips being shifted in position along the path of the wire belts with respect to the second strips so that the first and second strips are offset and in a non-opposing relationship; first support means for resiliently supporting the first drainage strips against the respective wire belt that the strips contact;

second support means supporting the second drainage strips rigidly against the second wire belt; and